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SUBJECT: GOR MILITARY DOCTRINE PRESENTS LITTLE THAT IS NEW

REF: 09 MOSCOW 3138

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Beyrle. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d), (h).

**¶1.** (C) Summary: On February 5 the GOR released its new military doctrine. At the same time President Medvedev also endorsed the unpublished document "Basic Principles of State Policy in the Field of Nuclear Deterrence Up to 2020." The new military doctrine, divided into four parts, is similar to the 2000 military doctrine. In the new military doctrine, NATO enlargement and activities around the world are specifically named as military dangers to Russia that could later become military threats. The new military doctrine, however, also calls for greater security cooperation with NATO and other international organizations. The language on the use of nuclear weapons differs little from the 2000 version, with Russia reserving the right to launch a nuclear first strike "when the very existence of the state is under threat." The new military doctrine, however, recognizes that most military conflicts Russia is likely to face in the future will be small, conventional wars. The doctrine proposed the modernization of Russia's conventional forces and reaffirms Russia's ties to the Collective Security Treaty Organization. The document on nuclear deterrence most likely spells out procedures for Russia to use its nuclear weapons. GOR officials argued that Russia has no plans to attack other states, but Russia nevertheless needed its nuclear deterrent. They also argued NATO should take Russia's concerns into account. Experts emphasized that the new military doctrine contains no ground-breaking provisions, and reflects divisions in the GOR on what Russia's security policy should be. End summary.

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Doctrine's Provisions Not Groundbreaking  
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**¶2.** (SBU) At a February 5 meeting of the permanent members of Russia's Security Council, President Medvedev endorsed Russia's new military doctrine, as well as an unpublished and presumably classified document entitled "Basic Principles of State Policy in the Field of Nuclear Deterrence Up to 2020." The new Russian military doctrine is divided into four parts:

**¶I.** General Provisions, **II.** Military Dangers and Military Threats to the Russian Federation, **III.** Military Policy of the Russian Federation, and **IV.** Military-Economic Support for Defense.

**¶3.** (SBU) Most notable in the military doctrine is that it explicitly names NATO's enlargement and its "desire to endow (its) force potential with global functions carried out in violation of the norms of international law" as Russia's "main external military danger," which could later become a

"military threat." Other military dangers to Russia (and presumably posed by NATO) include the deployment of missile defense (MD) systems, deployment of foreign troops in states neighboring Russia, and territorial claims against Russia and its allies (presumably a reference to Georgia's claims to South Ossetia and Abkhazia). Section III.19.e, however, calls for closer cooperation in the field of international security with NATO, the EU, the OSCE, and other international organizations.

**¶4. (C)** Contrary to predictions (reftel) by Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev and others, the new military doctrine does not allow for preemptive nuclear strikes (including in local conflicts). Instead, it downplays and restricts the role of nuclear weapons in Russia's security policy. In contrast to the previous Russian military doctrine, published in 2000, which said Russia could resort to nuclear weapons "in situations critical for national security," the new military doctrine allows their use when "the very existence of the state is under threat," whether the threat is conventional or nuclear. Under the new military doctrine, as in the previous version, Russia reserves the right to conduct the first nuclear strike in a conflict. Russia also intends to modernize its nuclear triad. The Russian President is responsible for deciding when to use nuclear weapons.

**¶5. (SBU)** Despite all the attention paid to Russia's nuclear deterrent, Sections II.13-15 of the new military doctrine recognized that modern conflicts will be small, localized, hard to predict, and conventional. The new doctrine calls

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for Russia to have more mobile forces equipped with high-tech conventional weapons. The new military doctrine also states that Russia considers an attack on any of its Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) allies an attack on all CSTO members.

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Veil Partially Lifted from Nuclear Deterrence Document  
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**¶6. (C)** An unnamed source from the Russian Security Council told local press that the main aim of the GOR's nuclear deterrence strategy are the prevention of aggression against Russia and the protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. According to the source, "Basic Principles of State Policy in the Field of Nuclear Deterrence Up to 2020" builds upon the military doctrine to define the GOR's position regarding nuclear deterrence and its role in Russia's national security. The source also said the document defines the conditions under which Russia may use nuclear weapons. Editor-In-Chief of the magazine National Defense Colonel Igor Korotchenko commented that, because of the short amount of time Russia would have to react to a nuclear attack, "the options for responses from Russia in each specific instance need to be determined in advance and regulated in detail." He speculated that these provisions are probably contained in the document.

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GOR Officials Comment on the Doctrine  
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**¶7. (SBU)** Commenting on the new military doctrine, Patrushev said that Russia's military policies were aimed at avoiding an arms race and military conflicts, but added military policy must address the real threats Russia faces. He argued that large-scale wars had become less likely, but smaller conflicts could break out in many regions of the world. Patrushev added that Russia had no plans to attack other states, but still needed nuclear weapons as a deterrent, especially because other states possessed nuclear weapons. He also expressed concerns that NATO enlargement posed a danger to Russian security.

¶ 8. (SBU) Other GOR officials weighed in as well. DPM Sergey Ivanov and Federation Council Defense and Security Committee Chair Viktor Ozerov commented that that new military doctrine differs little from the 2000 military doctrine "in terms of hypothetical use of nuclear weapons by Russia." DPM Ivanov added that Russian generals do not wish to use nuclear weapons against any state. FM Lavrov agreed with the military doctrine's provision that NATO's eastward enlargement was unacceptable to Russia. The Security Council's Deputy Secretary Yury Baluyevskiy stated that no state that possesses nuclear weapons has completely ruled out their use. Russia therefore "needs to guarantee its consistent democratic development" by maintaining its nuclear deterrent. Duma International Relations Committee Chair Konstantin Kosachev commented that, if NATO wanted better relations with Russia, then it should "change its attitude" and take Russia's concerns regarding NATO enlargement into account.

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GOR Dismisses NATO Objections to Doctrine  
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¶ 9. (SBU) On February 9 the MFA released a statement responding to NATO SYG Rasmussen's statements on February 6 that objected to the new military doctrine's provisions that refer to NATO as a threat. The statement dismisses SYG Rasmussen's objections, arguing that he "must have had little time" to study the new military doctrine. The MFA statement points out that the new military doctrine does not list NATO as a threat to Russia. The new military doctrine instead states NATO's enlargement and attempts to "globalize its functions in contravention of international law" as dangers to Russia.

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CSTO Welcomes New Military Doctrine  
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¶ 10. (SBU) CSTO SYG Nikolay Bordyuzha welcomed the new

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military doctrine, saying that it reflects new realities in guaranteeing military security. He drew attention to the fact that the new military doctrine envisages Russia's participation in "all entities of the CSTO collective security system: the Collective Rapid Reaction Force, the Collective Rapid Deployment Force based in Central Asia, and the Peacekeeping Force." He also hailed the new document as "confirming Russia's adherence to ally commitments in the CSTO."

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Experts Argue Doctrine Shows Bureaucratic Muddle  
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¶ 11. (C) Deputy Editor-In-Chief of Yezhednevniy Zhurnal Aleksandr Golts told us the new military doctrine did not contain much that was different from the 2000 military doctrine. He characterized the new military doctrine as a "practically harmless" document that "was the result of bureaucratic infighting." He posited that various factions of the GOR could not agree on what Russia's" military goals should be, and so a document of "15 pages filled with such revelations as the Volga River flowed into the Caspian Sea" was produced. References to NATO in the new military doctrine were included so that conservative elements in the GOR could express their displeasure with the West. Likewise, the unpublished "Basic Principles of State Policy in the Field of Nuclear Deterrence Up to 2020" was most likely issued as a sort of face-saving document for Patrushev, whose public predictions that the new military doctrine would allow for preemptive nuclear strikes did not come true, according to Golts.

¶12. (C) Golts argued that the pace and direction of Russia's military reforms would not change. He said that once military reforms were completed, Russia would have 87 infantry brigades and 100 air force squadrons; not enough to challenge NATO. The only conceivable major military challenge to Russia would come from China, he said, but Russia could not include this in the military doctrine because China and Russia were both members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. At any rate, Russia would most likely resort to tactical nuclear weapons in a war with China, he argued.

¶13. (C) Other experts agreed, saying the new military doctrine was an "exercise in public relations" designed to appease various factions of the Russian government. The daily Moskovskiy Komsomolets agreed, arguing that the West should not take the new military doctrine's concerns about NATO too seriously. "Political slogans are one thing, and life is another," it stated.

¶14. (C) Head of the Center for International Security at the Institute of World Economics and International Relations Aleksey Arbatov argued that language in the new military doctrine regarding nuclear weapons was mild. He said that despite the fact that Russia reserved the right to carry out a nuclear strike first, the bar has been raised so high that it could be called a peace doctrine.

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Comment  
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¶15. (C) References to the NATO "danger," added most likely as a sop to the security services, do not represent a more aggressive stance vis-a-vis the West, but rather a reiteration of complaints we have heard before. References to more cooperation with NATO, as well as acknowledgement that conflicts in the future will most likely require a mobile, high-tech army to fight, show that MinDef Serdyukov's military reforms are not in danger of cancellation. The attempt to please all constituencies has resulted in a military doctrine that is less a doctrine than a statement of intentions and goals. Russia's new military doctrine shows that, even in Russia, all politics is local.  
Beyrle